



The President's Daily Brief

7 November 1973

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Cease-fire violations were reported from both fronts in the Middle East yesterday; Israel gave out some casualty figures for the first time; there is growing pressure for a UN Security Council meeting soon; Faysal will push [] hard for Israeli concessions including Arab control of Jerusalem [] as many as three Arab summits may be in the offing; the EC nine passed a slightly pro-Arab resolution yesterday. (Page 1)

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North Vietnamese may be preparing major attacks in South Vietnam. (Page 4)

Soviet October Revolution keynote speech was restrained in treating relations with the US. (Page 5)

Soviets developing fast-reaction ABM similar to US Sprint. (Page 7)

Bonn thinks Scheel visit to Moscow was moderately successful but all problems remain. (Page 8)

CSCE, in six weeks, has not moved beyond general discussions and business not likely to be completed by early 1974. (Page 9)

A note on International Monetary Developments. (Page 10)

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ARAB STATES - ISRAEL

Cease-fire violations were reported from both fronts yesterday.

Damascus charged that Israeli aircraft attacked Syrian positions in the central and southern sectors of the front, using what it described as Shrike missiles--a US missile used to destroy radars. The Syrians claim to have repelled the attacks, while an Israeli spokesman contended he had "no information" on them. The attacks cannot be confirmed. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The Syrian front has been relatively quiet since the cease-fire, and this attack is the first major violation to be reported.

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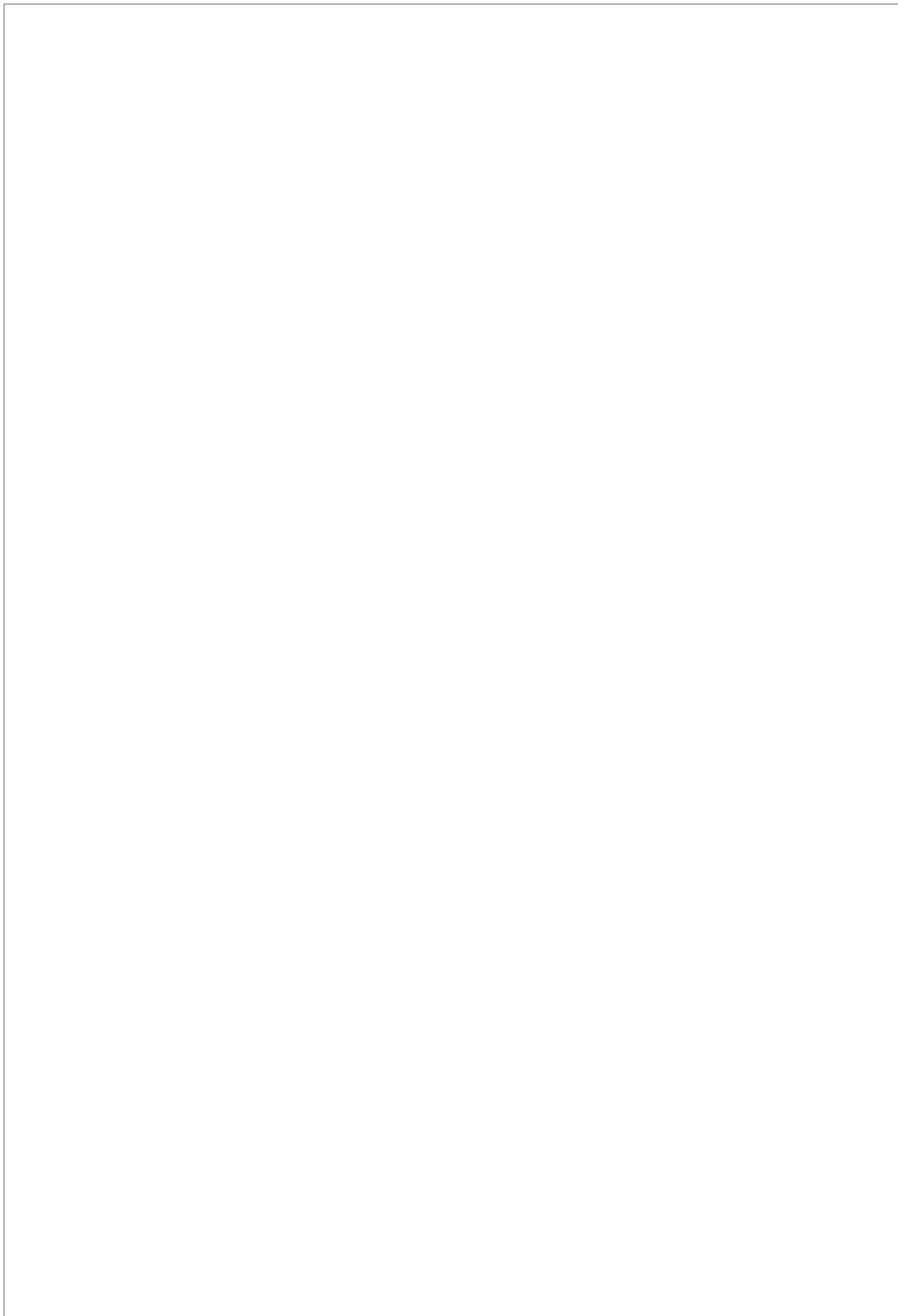
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On the Egyptian front, an Israeli military spokesman reported one minor incident in the Second Army sector yesterday and two others in the Third Army area. According to Tel Aviv, the Egyptians initiated all three incidents but broke contact when the Israelis opened fire. No casualties were reported. A UN observer also reports seeing an Egyptian SAM fired at an aircraft near the Little Bitter Lake.

The Israelis have agreed to permit an additional 50 trucks with nonmilitary supplies to pass through their lines to the encircled Egyptian Third Army. This will bring to 175 the number of trucks which the Israelis have allowed through. Elsewhere in the southern sector, however, UN observers report that the Israelis have dammed the Sweetwater Canal outside Suez City. Stagnant fresh water remains in the canal and is drinkable with suitable treatment, but will become less so with time because the canal is used for sewage.

Israel announced yesterday that 1,854 of its soldiers were killed during the war, and that an almost equal number of wounded were still hospitalized. The Israelis have previously kept casualty totals quiet, except for an announcement on October 15 that 656 soldiers had been killed in the first eight days of fighting. While the public has suspected heavy casualties, these figures--three times the total during the 1967 war--will be a shock to casualty-sensitive Israel. The figures could have a sobering effect on those favoring a renewal of the war, and Prime Minister Meir may be trying to prepare the public for some concessions.

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At the UN, there is growing pressure for a formal meeting of the Security Council--possibly today--on Israel's failure to pull back to the cease-fire lines of October 22. The nonaligned states, particularly Kenya, seem to be the chief agitators for a public session. Movement toward a Council meeting is no doubt intended to bring pressure on the US; the nonaligned states used this tactic before the cease-fire and are apparently employing it now to underline the Arab message that there must be some positive developments from Secretary Kissinger's Middle East consultations.

Egypt [redacted]

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[redacted] tied the start of negotiations only to an Israeli pullback to the Sinai passes. The Egyptians still demand total Israeli withdrawal eventually, but this clarification indicates that they are somewhat less rigid on the timing than [redacted] first suggested.

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Syria, in the meantime, is apparently somewhat fearful that Egypt will negotiate an Egyptian-Israeli settlement without reference to Syria's border problems. [redacted]

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Saudi King Faysal intends to push for maximum Israeli concessions [redacted]

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[redacted] he will ask for complete Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, using the oil embargo as leverage. The King will reportedly abide by the ultimate decisions of the frontline Arab states regarding exact border delineations with Israel, but with respect to Jerusalem, he is personally committed to complete Arab control. He might reluctantly accept UN administration of the city, but only if this is the sole means of ensuring removal of the Israelis. [redacted]

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Plans are going forward for three summit conferences involving Arab countries. The separate travels of Presidents Qadhafi and Boumediene in recent days were probably intended in part to consolidate plans for the Arab summit conference which Qadhafi is urging and Boumediene may host in the near future. In addition, Boumediene's call for a summit meeting of Organization of African Unity countries has been answered favorably by all Arab member states and several key African nations; Boumediene may hope to host this conference also immediately following the Arab summit.

Still a third summit is in the mill. Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have agreed to cosponsor a meeting in Islamabad of the heads of Islamic Conference states at the urging of Malaysia's Tunku Abdul Rahman, the conference secretary general. 25X1

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 Arab leaders such as Sadat and King Faysal may see this meeting as a more effective means of advancing their cause than a purely Arab summit, which could become a forum for Arab radicalism. 25X1

The foreign ministers of the nine EC countries, meeting in Brussels, issued a joint declaration on the Middle East yesterday that leans slightly toward the Arab side. The declaration calls on the forces of both sides to return immediately to positions occupied on October 22 and urges negotiations within the UN framework. The statement did not, however, charge Britain and France, as Security Council permanent members, with representing the nine, probably because the two are more pro-Arab than many of the other EC members.

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NORTH VIETNAM

The North Vietnamese command in charge of the logistics and infiltration system has told at least two subordinates, both in the Laos panhandle, that Communist forces will soon be "striking the enemy and systematically annihilating them," according to preliminary field translations. The subordinates were warned to take necessary precautions against retaliatory strikes on the transportation network.

These messages could presage major attacks in some areas of South Vietnam, but they may also mean only an extension of the sharp local attacks predicted in many parts of the South. Hanoi may believe that, with the US heavily preoccupied by the situation in the Middle East and domestic problems, this is a particularly good time to launch attacks on a large scale.

One of the units known to have received the message is located near South Vietnam's Military Region I, where Communist offensive capabilities are greatest, but where weather conditions are not ideal at this time of year for large-scale military action. No changes have been noted in the communications of the tactical units that would be involved in such attacks, although coverage of these units is no longer as comprehensive as it once was.

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USSR

The keynote speech at yesterday's October Anniversary celebrations in Moscow was noteworthy for its restrained treatment of Soviet relations with the US and for the accolades given to party chief Brezhnev.

Traditionally an occasion for marking Soviet successes, the speech delivered by senior Politburo member Andrey Kirilenko was no exception. Kirilenko surveyed the world situation as it has developed over the past year, drawing special attention to Moscow's policy of detente and to Brezhnev's personal role in the formulation and implementation of that policy. According to Kirilenko, "promising shifts" have occurred in the political situation in Europe, most notably in Moscow's relations with France, West Germany, and Britain, and the outlook is for further improvement. Among his many references to the Soviet party leader, Kirilenko said that Brezhnev's contribution to detente in Europe and in the world at large is "universally acknowledged."

Kirilenko's treatment of Soviet relations with the US was generally positive, but reflected strains brought about by developments in the Middle East crisis. He said that the USSR attaches "much importance" to relations with the US, but he modified Moscow's appreciation of accomplishments over the past two years by asserting that developments are only moving "in the direction" of detente. Similarly, citing the major documents of the Moscow and Washington summits and Soviet adherence to them, he said the US was also expected to adhere to the spirit and letter of those agreements.

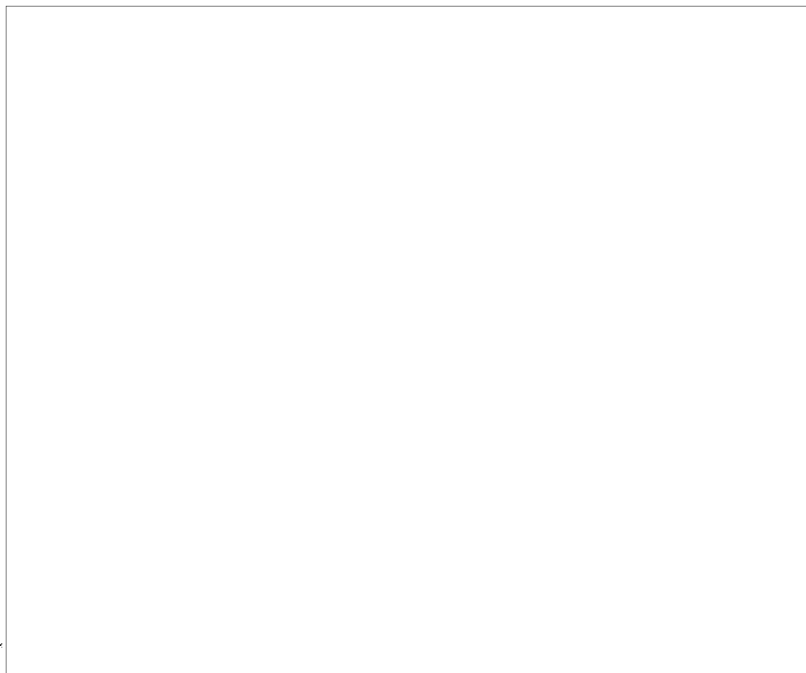
Kirilenko's review of the situation in the Middle East was fairly relaxed, though it contained customary attacks against Israel. He maintained that Israeli forces must be withdrawn to positions occupied at the time of the cease-fire of October 22, and said their withdrawal is an "urgent necessity" and a "first step" toward settlement of the conflict. His treatment of the Middle East was highlighted by the assertion that prospects for stable peace in the area are better now than ever before.

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His discussion of the Soviet domestic situation contained high praise for recent accomplishments and held out promise for further achievements. He repeated Brezhnev's claim of a record grain harvest, and went on to attribute this success specifically to the policies initiated by Brezhnev eight years ago. In keeping with his generally upbeat presentation, Kirilenko said that the prospects for fulfilling the main indices of the Five-Year Plan are good, and that the regime will continue to devote primary attention to improving the standard of living.

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USSR

[redacted]
[redacted] the Soviets are developing a fast-reaction ABM similar to the US Sprint.

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A cone-shaped missile seen at the ABM test complex at Sary Shagan [redacted] is of a different size and shape from the two ABMs that have been undergoing flight tests there for some time. (These are the ABM-1B, like those deployed around Moscow, and the SH-4, which has been flight tested periodically since 1971 but never deployed.)

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Both the ABM-1B and the SH-4 are designed to intercept targets above the atmosphere, where they cannot distinguish between the chaff clouds dispensed by an incoming ICBM and the re-entry vehicle itself. With a high acceleration missile, the Soviets could wait until the incoming warheads have re-entered the atmosphere, and the chaff is dissipated, before firing their interceptors.

The current Soviet ABM force still consists of 64 launchers near Moscow. The Soviets may be awaiting the development of a fast-reaction ABM system before filling out deployment to the limit permitted under the terms of the ABM treaty.

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WEST GERMANY - USSR

Bonn is portraying Foreign Minister Scheel's visit to Moscow last week as a moderate success, even though the two sides appear to have made little, if any, progress on settling outstanding problems.

On the question of handling West Berlin's legal assistance problems in the Communist world, the Soviets were reluctant to accept Scheel's proposal that West Berlin and West German courts deal directly with Soviet courts. The Soviets claimed that they had to consult with their "allies" and to consider the ramifications of this procedure for the Soviet legal system. They did, however, suggest that the subject might be discussed later by groups of experts from both sides.

Moscow took the line that this "agreement in principle to consider" the West German proposal is a major concession to which the West Germans should respond by resuming negotiations to establish diplomatic relations with Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Those talks broke down last summer when the West Germans insisted that their embassies in these countries be allowed to represent West Berlin legal institutions. Bonn believes the Soviets were behind the refusal of the East European countries to yield on this issue.

The West Germans have announced that, as a result of what they call the "legal compromise reached in Moscow," talks will begin again in the near future. In addition to wanting to present Scheel's visit in the best possible light, the West Germans may regard the Soviet suggestion to reopen talks as a signal that Moscow will not object to the pragmatic, court-to-court solution of the legal aid issue.

As expected, the Soviets raised the subject of low-interest West German economic credits to finance joint economic projects. No decisions were reached, but the two sides agreed to consider the credit issue at the next meeting of the joint economic commission in December.

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EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE

After more than six weeks, the Geneva Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe has still not moved beyond general discussions. The committees and subcommittees have proceeded so slowly that many observers now doubt that the conference can wind up its business in early 1974.

The Soviets, who desire an early end to the conference, have been pushing a draft on "principles of security" that emphasizes the "inviolability of frontiers." The West Germans, in particular, oppose the Soviet draft. They wish to link the principle of inviolability of frontiers with the nonuse of force in order to hold open the possibility of an eventual peaceful reunification of the two Germanys. Several drafts have been considered and sharply criticized by one side or the other. A Yugoslav draft may provide the basis for an eventual compromise.

A near-stalemate has developed on the controversial question of freer movement of people and ideas between the two blocs. The Soviets insist that specific measures must await agreement on certain general principles. These principles--sovereignty, noninterference in the internal affairs of states, and respect for international laws and customs--would, if the Soviets had their way, be included in a preamble and would have the effect of emasculating the specific measures designed to bring about freer movement.

The other main topic--economic cooperation--is also at a virtual standstill. The West thought the Eastern representatives would be making demands in this area, but thus far they have not done so. What has happened is that the members of the European Community, although claiming special competence in the economic cooperation area, have not been able to agree on a common position of their own.

The neutral participants as well as Warsaw Pact maverick Romania have been pressing hard for a link between the security conference and the force reduction talks which began last week in Vienna. The Soviets oppose any such linkage, but have been humoring the neutrals by suggesting that all European states could participate in the force reduction talks. Several of the Eastern representatives at Vienna also mentioned, in their opening statements, the possibility of widening their forum. The NATO allies have consistently opposed such moves.

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NOTE

International Monetary Developments: The dollar continued to strengthen in active trading yesterday, rising to its highest level relative to the other major currencies since June. It has appreciated most against the Dutch guilder and German mark, both of which have fallen as a result of Arab oil cutbacks. There are no signs of further Arab dollar sales. The price of gold has remained relatively stable during the past ten days.

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